

Devotional and Selections

"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

A Meditation on The Lord's Prayer.

In his quaint way, Matthew Henry says of the Lord's prayer: "The Lord's prayer, as indeed every prayer, is a letter sent from earth to heaven.

There is the inscription of the letter, the Person to whom it is addressed: Our Father.

The address, where sent: In Heaven.

The contents, in several errands of request, the close: For Thine is the Kingdom, etc.

The Seal: Amen.

And, if you will, the date: This Day."

There is not a pleasure which we enjoy on earth which is not sweeter for being shared with some one.

Thank God that our Lord, when he was teaching us how to pray, began by reminding us of this. That we can never follow the divine command: "After this manner pray ye," without asking for our brother man the same blessings that we ask for ourselves. For it is evidently not for our nearest and dearest alone that we are taught thus to pray, but coming to God as the "All-Father," we come as members of the brotherhood of man.

Our Father! Yes, yours and mine, friend, whether we be of one fold or not,—whether for the brief years that men call life, we live in a palace or in a cottage,—if only we are Christ's.

"Our Father" whether we cling close to his side with the spirit of childlike trust that characterizes those nearest to him, or whether, as poor prodigals, we have wandered far away, and are feeding on husks. "Our Father,"—alas! there are some who do not know the sweetness of the tie that binds father and child. Some have lost the father-love early in infancy, other some, alas! have the father in name only. He is neither guide, protector, nor provider for their wants. God pity them! They can not understand the sweetest thought in the Lord's prayer. They can not fully realize how blessed we are when we are permitted to cry: "Abba Father," which as some one has said, most beautifully indicates a tender familiarity, a holy, and yet childlike boldness,—the boldness of the child who not only knows that his father loves him, but that he is wise and and that he can do anything he wishes to do.

There is, to one who has lost the sweetness of the filial relation with a human being, an exquisite consolation in knowing that we can never be orphaned of God's love, never fear, neglect or estrangement on his part.

As soon as the heart of the weakest man cries: "Abba, Father", the great, loving heart of God replies: "What wilt thou have, my child?" And thus there springs up a fountain of loving, trustful peace in his heart.—"the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Our confidence in the ability of any one to assist us in time of need, to comfort us in time of great sorrow, is strong in proportion to their strength. If we call on one who is wiser, more influential, wealthier than

we are, we feel a certain amount of confidence, but if, in addition to wisdom, and influence and wealth, we are sure that he loves us, then we spend little time in wondering whether he will help us or not, we know that he will do it!

But earthly parents and friends, however they may possess these qualifications, are still human. They are liable to err, they are subject to temptations, as we are,—this Father is in heaven.

When he says: "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my children," we know that his will be a wise, a tender, and an eternal love, for he has said so. And we know too, that heaven is home for his children,—that there is not only a place prepared for us, but a glad welcome awaiting us, when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Therefore it is with a new and confident joy that we say:

"Our Father which art in heaven."

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CHRIST THE TREASURE HOUSE.

By the late Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

As I look at all the wealth of leaves on yonder trees, and the array of tulips in yonder garden, the question arises—whence have they all come? Where were they all through the long, cold winter? They were hidden away in the trunks and the roots of the trees, and in the bulbs which were buried down in the earth below the reach of killing frosts. The Creator secreted them there in order to preserve them. So has he hidden the gold and silver in the mines to be dug for, and the pearls in the deep sea to be dived after. All the splendid discoveries of the astronomer are simply the finding of what God hid away in the distant nebulae in the morning of creation. There are countless treasures yet to be unfolded to the explorers of nature in the heavens above us, and the strata of the earth beneath us.

Now just as our all-wise Father has stored away the germs of life and the seeds to keep them for us, and just as he has filled coal beds and mines with precious treasures for our digging after them, even so "in Christ are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Jesus is the great inexhaustible storehouse; whatever is "hidden" in him is not concealed forever; it is simply stored up there for the use of his needy, dependent, hungry people. When Jesus was on earth very few found out what a gold mine of truth and spiritual wealth and life he was. All these things "were hid from the wise and the prudent," from the rabbis and the philosophers, but they were "revealed unto the babes." The child-like inquirers found in him all the treasures of wisdom and grace. It is so yet. Those who hunger are brought into his banqueting house; those who thirst are led to his deep, sparkling well. When we feel our ignorance enough to go to him, we discover all the treasures of spiritual wisdom and knowledge. Childlike giants in intellect, such as Luther and Chalmers, and childlike peasants, such as the "shepherd of Salisbury plain," all dug into the same mine, and brought up the precious nuggets. As a minister I have been digging for forty years in the Gospel by John, and the ore bed of truth "pans out" more and more richly at every stroke of the mattock. Wonder-